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SOME
CONSIDERATIONS

Offer'd to the

Citizens of *BRISTOL*,

Relating to the

Corporation for the POOR

In the said

CITY.

Printed in the Year 1711.

S O M E

Considerations, &c.

THE First Publick Pretence for Erecting *Work-Houses* about the Kingdom, was, That the Poor might be set to some Labour, whereby something might be gotten towards a Maintenance, and so become less chargeable to their respective Parishes; which I confess look'd very plausible, but whether it has answer'd that End in this City, is what I am about to enquire into.

In the 7th and 8th of *William* the Third, there was an Act of Parliament obtain'd, which constituted *A Corporation for Managing the Poor*, which was put in Execution, and our Poor were taken out of the Hands of the *Church-Wardens* and *Overseers* of the respective Parishes, and managed by the said Corporation; who erected *Work-houses*, and therein try'd Projects for some Years on several Manufactures, but at last on due Examination, they found themselves considerable Loosers thereby; which made them lay aside all those Projects, and for a considerable Time there has been no Employment but Picking a little Oakum, which is scandalous Labour for Children, and which they only rob the Aged Poor of, in St. James's and other Out-Parishes: Nor can any Work be thought of hitherto for them, by which we should not be Loosers.

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There was 5000 *l.* raised on the City by Vertue of the above *Act for Erecting Work-Houses, &c.* and upwards of 4000 *l.* more has been receiv'd from Charitable Gifts, but all is unaccountably sunk. It being far from Truth, what is suggested in a late Petition to the Honourable *House of Commons*, under the Name of our Mayor, &c. That part of their Body had inspected the Accounts of the said *Corporation*, and found them exactly kept; for they were not inspected by them, and if they had attempted it, 'tis not to be found, even on the strictest Search, how those large Sums have been expended.

And for want of hard Labour to imploy the People about in this *Work-House*, it is now, and I believe always was, in some Measure, crowded with Idle, Lazy and Lewd People; and I can see no way to prevent it, for the House was Purged about Twelve Months since, with a great deal of Pains and Rigour, and 'tis certainly now as ill fill'd again, as ever, the Lazy and Idle naturally hanging on a Place where there is no Labour; and then if our Magistrates meet with any Idle Persons in the Streets, away they send them to the Mint, as 'tis phras'd, where there is neither Labour nor Correction for them.

It is a prodigious Expence that arises out of this *Work-house* Yearly; little less than half the Sum that is Annually rais'd for our whole Poor, which is 2376 *l.* 16 *s.* 5 *d.* And yet they pretend not to Account but for about 170 Souls therein, all which are not in the House, but some Children are nursed abroad, and the Charge accounted for there; and I think they give not above 2 *s.* per Week, for any so nurs'd, when, 'tis apparent, those People in the House stand us in not less than 3 *s.* per Week, one with another; and I believe it may be found on the most favourable Computation, that the rest of our Poor without

Doors

Doors, or out of the House, comparing Persons within, with those without, I mean for Age, &c. have not much above one Third part of that Allowance, by which Means some of them, that have not other Charitable Assistance, are half starv'd, and if so, it must be a very unjust Distribution of the Money rais'd.

Part of the before-mention'd Charge of the House, arises from large Salaries and Wages to Officers and Servants, with a Maintenance to most of them besides, which amounts to a considerable Sum.

Now if the Case be thus, how comes it to pass, That the bare Name of a *Work-House* will help us to maintain our Poor on better Terms than formerly? We must now (as then) do it by dint of our Money; and I cannot see how *Guardians* are better qualified to dispose of this, than *Church-Wardens* (who, I think, use to pay the Casual Poor formerly) They may happen to be Men of like Abilities, but, on the general, I presume, it may pass in Favour of the Latter, who to be sure, have gone through most, if not all, Offices in the Parish, before they come to that; which a great many of the former have not, and so seem to be utter Strangers to such Business.

But there seems to be one thing that is like to puzzle us to get over, and which seems to stick closest with a great many judicious Men, who otherwise are great Enemies to the general Management of this *Corporation*. And this is the taking and breeding up poor Children in a Virtuous Way, as they call it, that formerly us'd to lye under Glass-houses, &c. which shall be accounted for, as near as I can, according to its true Merit.

By the best Account I can get, there are Thirty One Children, Male and Female, in (what they call) the *Nursery*; which, I presume, will be allow'd, are not quite ready for the virtuous Impress they design them,

and so might, I think, be as well nurs'd abroad at Two Shillings *per Week* as there at Three Shillings.

The Second Sort are those brought down from the *Nursery*, or elsewhere, into the *School-Room*, and are there taught to Read, by a Woman, I believe, well enough qualified in that Way; which when attain'd, some of them are taught to Write; the Number of all these is about 55. This is readily allow'd to be very Commendable, and Praise-worthy, and one would think that Children thus trayn'd up, should be sought after for Apprentices by ordinary Tradesmen and Artificers; but 'tis quite the Reverse; very rarely any honest, industrious Man desiring any of the Family. Indeed a great many have been plac'd out to poor *Weavers*, or other poor Tradesmen, that have only taken them for the Lucre of the Forty or Fifty Shillings that was given with them; and when this Money has been spent, were forc'd to Run for it, this being the last Shift, and the Child returns to the House half-Starv'd: This I am sure has oftentimes been the Case. Several Boys have been likewise plac'd out to Sea; but if there was not a particular Law to oblige *Masters of Ships* to take such Children, we should find it very difficult to put any off that way. I know they do all they can to shift and evade it, and I have heard some of them say, - "They would rather give Money for a Country Boy, than take Ours with the Fifty Shillings, they generally proving very Idle and Roguish.

But whether for want of Discipline, and a good *Decorum* in trayning them up, or from an ill Fate that has hitherto attended this project, it should so happen, I will not say; but that 'tis Fact I relate, must be obvious to every Person that knows any thing of this Corporation.

Now I think 'tis pretty plain, there is nothing very valuable in this House, but that of Trayning up Children,

dren, and how far that comes short of Expectation, is I hope, plainly demonstrated. But if we approve of breeding up poor Children something after this Way, had we not better set up, after the Example of most of the Noted Cities in this Kingdom. a *Charity-School* or *Schools*? And even for a greater Number, than these few; which I question not, but would more fully answer our Ends, and not keep this Great House, as a *Receptacle* for idle People, and waste so much Money therein.

At the first forming of this Family, 'twas urg'd as Necessary by some, that the Divine Favour and Protection should be implor'd daily by them, in some way or other; which was not much oppos'd, but was some Time in agreeing on the Method: The *Publick Form* was offer'd by some, as us'd in the *Establish'd Church*, leaving out the *Absolution*; but this was by some of the *Clergy* thought unfit for a *Family* (altho' this is six times as large as some *Country Congregations*) Others, with very good Reason, I think, were for having some of the admirable *Collects* in the *Common Prayer-Book* put together, and so fitted for their Use: but they could not have *Benefit of Clergy* for this neither: This was call'd *Mangling*; a strange Stiffness, in my Opinion. for the Original was still to continue in its Place, and only the Use of a Copy propos'd. But at last they agreed on a more infallible Way, it seems. by requesting a *Divine* of the Town to compose a *Form* for them, which he accordingly did. If the Piece does not speak the Author, please to know, 'twas the Reverend Mr. T. C. But it was to pass the Judgment of a *Person Learned in the Law* before it went to the Press, who it seems lop'd off several Branches, and being an Enemy to *Forms* in general, thought, I suppose, if there must be an *Evil*, the less the better.

But, by the Way, please to observe that the Grown and Aged People, that were able to come, were never requir'd, nor call'd to join in these Prayers: which is very strange to me; I should have thought it, at least, as needful for Them as the Children.

I think the Largeness of our City, may be an Objection against this our Constitution; which makes it next to impossible to manage the Poor in this Method, without Distraction. For the *Committees* that are appointed must be subject to very great Vicissitudes, thro' their private Business that interferes, and which most prefer; so what is done by the former, is often undone by succeeding *Committees*.

But I expect 'twill be said, this might be prevented in some Measure, by the laying down and observing proper Rules and Methods in their Proceedings. To which I answer, that tolerable good Rules have been laid down for this Purpose; but move their Observation till you are hoarse and 'tis to no manner of Purpose; A true *Factionous Spirit* scorns to be confin'd, and really it would amaze one to see sometimes what a great Confusion this leads Men into.

A Second Objection, is a general Defect in looking after *Strangers* and *Immates*, by which great Charges and Inconveniencies arise. Indeed there is an Officer has a Salary for that Purpose, but this only deceives us; for I think it not possible for One Man to do that Business effectually; nor for less than some One Person in every Parish, push'd on and Rewarded by the *Church-Wardens*, &c. And even this would hardly do, in some of the Out-Parishes, it is a Work of such Difficulty.

And I cannot think it quite besides our Purpose to Observe, that by the ill Management of the Benefactions before mention'd, the Current of People's *Charity* seems to be stop'd. The Poor were us'd to be minded

mind'd by those of any Substance Living or Dying with a Sum small or great, in order to entail a Blessing upon the rest; but of late Years they seem not to be willing to entrust such *Stewards*; by which Poor Families are disappointed of great Helps, that use to arise from such Gifts.

Now if what is here offer'd be *Fast*, (as any Person would do well to enquire into, if he be not satisfied) it is neither for the Interest of the Poor, nor of those that are to maintain them, to continue the Method now on Foot. What then should be the Reasons of some of our *Whiggs*, and the *Dissenters* in general to tuggle and Struggle so hard for it? Nay, as stiffly as if 'twas for a *late Ministry*. Some of them are Men of good Sence, and have readily acknowledg'd, when closely put to them, the Mismanagement and Confusion, that has of late attended this Affair. What then, I say, should be their Reasons? It is certainly not the Good of the *General Poor* they aim at; their Charity does not use to be so extensive, but is commonly confin'd to those of *their own Perswasion*. Then it must be an *Itch of Government and Dominion*, in Order to carry on their Factious Designs; which was certainly the Original and true Reason of erecting This, and all such *New Corporations* about the Kingdom.

I expect it will be objected, that not only the *Whiggs*, but some of the *Church-Party*, nay even *Pinnacle-Men*, as they are pleas'd to call them, appear as Zealous in this Matter, as any *Dissenter*. We grant there are a few such, who to our Wonder have sided with the *Whiggs*, in supporting this *Corporation*; and I am so charitable as to believe, with no ill Intention, but to be rather owing to the Misrepresentations and False Glosses of their *Whiggish* and *Dissenting* Neighbours, some of which have been *Guardians*, and so pretend to

to a great deal of Knowledge in this Affair. But I leave the Reader to Judge, whether it be not only Pretence; For how promising soever the Case might have been formerly, yet it is now in Fact as before laid down; and, however purg'd and Reform'd, it cannot turn to the Benefit and Advantage of the City, for *There is no building a good Superstructure on a bad Foundation.* Which I think is sufficient to answer the Objection some Gentlemen have made, That we have only argu'd from *Matter of Fact* to *Constitution*.

But we are much concern'd that some of our Worthy Friends have taken such a wrong Byass, and should be made thus Tools of, by ill designing Men; while They stand behind the Curtain, and sneer at the *Tragi-Comedy*.

However, it is certain, they make Use of this Handle to divide us; and 'twas a late Saying of a *Pious Whigg*, disputing on this Matter, *D——n the Mint, if we can but Divide them, it will in a great Measure answer the End.* But, I hope, we shall take Care to disappoint them in their Expectations.

But some among us pretend to answer all Objections against the *Mint*, by telling us, *That some Parishes in the Country pay double, and some treble for Maintenance of their Poor, to what they did 15 or 20 Years ago; and therefore we ought not to think it hard to have 700 l. per Annum more laid on the City for that End.* And they farther say, *We ought to think our selves very Happy in coming off so Cheap, under such a tedious War, with its Effects, that of Course must increase our Poor.* This has been pick'd up from some Neighbouring Gentlemen, and industriously handed about.

To which I answer, That these Gentlemen know little of our Case, or I am sure, by talking at this Rate, they greatly mistake our Intention. For we chiefly contend, for having all our Poor maintain'd Comfortably, those Without Doors, as well as those within

Within, let it cost what it will. If it exceeds the present Sum, we will chearfully pay our Share; but are fully satisfy'd, the most effectual Way for doing this, is by every Parish's taking to their own Poor, and managing them distinctly; by which Means Strangers and Innates would be carefully look'd after. When the Charge comes to affect Men more particularly, their Interest (a sacred thing with most) would oblige them, to be more careful and diligent in that Point; and thereby we should be likewise freed from the unnecessary Expence of that great *Dormitory*; for I think, for the Future, we ought to call it any thing, rather than by the wrong Name of a *Work-House*.

And besides, I take our Case to be far different from most, if not all, *Country-Parishes*; especially where Cloathing, or any other single Manufacture has brought together a great many Working People. For no sooner that fails, but they immediately become Chargeable, having no other Employment there to get a Livelyhood by: Whereas in this City, there is Diversity of Labour, to be always had for the Industrious, so that all our able Hands seldom need to want Work of one Sort or other, if they diligently seek it.

I believe it may be allow'd, That the Decay of the *Stuff-Trade*, has left a few Weavers Families upon us: And perhaps the Misfortunes of the War by Sea, has occasion'd a few Families more to be chargeable. I cannot allow very many, I mean particularly occasioned by the War; and as for other Accidents at Sea, I suppose those may be allowed to be equal in Time of Peace as War.

Therefore I cannot find out the Truth of the mighty Pretences of this Kind, set forth in the late Petitions to the Parliament for raising 700 l. *per Annum* more upon us. For I fancy, our Occasions are not so great

great, but that if this Affair was put into the Old Channel, with a common Industry, it might be manag'd to the Satisfaction of the Poor, with a small additional Charge; especially after Matters were well settled. The great Trouble of reforming this confus'd Business, and settling the Poor in their respective Parishes, is made use of by some as an Argument for continuing this *Corporation*. A very mean one, I think; for if it be a Disadvantage, and an Abuse to the Poor and the City in General, 'twill Savour very much of Laziness and Imprudence, if we do not endeavour to get into a better Way. For suppose a Traveller had mistaken his Road, and rode 3 or 4 Miles before he discover'd it, what should we think of this Man's Reason, if immediately on Information, he did not endeavour to get into the right Path? For certainly the farther he went on in the wrong one, the more he would be bewilder'd. And I cannot see the mighty Difficulty that would attend this Work, if it was set about in good earnest, by Persons fitly Authoriz'd; part of which, I think, with Submission, ought to be Men that have lately been Conversant about the Poor.

There are some other Reasons I have heard in Favour of this *Corporation*. As

First, It would occasion endless Disputes at Law. Which, as to the first settling of the Poor, I think, is sufficiently answer'd already; and 'tis my Opinion farther, That it might be done with little more trouble, than is at one of our Half-yearly Visitations. And proper Measures might likewise be thought on, for making it easy afterwards.

Secondly, The *Justices* would be continually crowded at *Tolkey*. I must confess I can find but very little Stress in this Objection. As to *Certificates*, *Informations*, and *Warrants of Removal*, it is they only that ratify

ratify them now. Then it must be by Complaints of the Poor, for better Subsistence. This, I presume, they are not wholly free from now; and as now the usual Answer is, — *Go to the Mint*, it is but then to say, — *Go to the Church-Wardens, or Overseers*; and I presume 'twill then be in their own Power, to make the proper Officer both able and willing, to supply all the necessary Wants of the Poor. And really I cannot but Wonder, that they so tamely suffer'd themselves to be divested of this Power formerly. Indeed the Intreague was manag'd with Privacy, and not above one of them (if I am rightly inform'd) Joyn'd heartily; the rest that knew of it, were either averse to it or else stood Neuter. This was like to have nipt it in the Bud; but a Clause was gotten in the *Twerton Act*, which made Matters goe on smoothly for a Season, and they had the Honour left them of being *perpetual Guardians*. I fancy when the *Great Projector* had brought all this to bear, it was very pleasing to him, to see that he had rais'd a considerable Government in the City, *Independent* in a great Measure, of the *Common Magistrate*.

It may be granted, that the Justices Clerks would have a little more Business, but they would hardly be displeas'd, I believe, when paid for it. And how inconsiderable would this Charge be, to what our Clerks, barely, stand us in now? And we might then expect to have our Warrants of Removal, &c. properly worded; for want of which, it is well known, we have suffer'd of late considerably, when done by Persons not properly qualify'd.

Thirdly, A greater Expence in *Physick* and *Surgery*. This, with some Others that follow, have little Weight in them. However, that People may not think them Unanswerable, something shall be said. But what is set forth in our *Magistrate's Petition* before mention'd, seems

seem to supersede the Necessity of an *Answer*. For therein they do not allow, that any Care or Charge of this Kind was taken, before this *Corporation* was set up. Why then should it be after? which is very strange; Let those that were *Church wardens* and *Overseers* in those Days answer for themselves; for if True, it was very inhuman and Barbarous.

But to the Point. If we survive this *Corporation*, and continue in our right Minds, we shall think at least as much Care of this Kind, to be needful, as is taken now, and, I hope, somewhat more; I am sure more is very Necessary. As to Expence of *Physick*, no Boundaries are set to that, by a certain Salary. Then why might it not be possible to meet with some other Men in the Town, not much inferior in Knowledge and Integrity, to the Person that now engrosses the Whole, who would look after any particular Parish on as easy Terms, as 'tis now done? But suppose the Expence in most Cases was far greater; so as the Care was answerable, would it not be Money sav'd on the General, when Humanly speaking, *A sick Person might sometimes be brought about in a few Days, that, now, lyes Languishing for Months, or Tears?*

The Surgeons indeed have a certain Salary, viz 32*l.* per Annum. But how well this answers, might be woefully seen by any Person, that would give himself the Trouble, of examining into Particulars. Very rarely any Cure is made, for it's usually left to the Management of Raw Servants, by which they are to gain Experience; an expensive Way to some of those Poor Creatures! But indeed if the Young Men really improve themselves thereby, it may be said, *That the Rich are Cur'd at the Expence of the Poor.* But if this Way is approv'd of, cannot every particular Parish have its Surgeon at a certain Salary? Surely I believe without Difficulty.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, That the Out-Parishes would be Sufferers by returning into the Old Way, And

Fifthly, That St. Peter's Parish in particular would be intolerably Loaded by the Base-Children that from Time to Time have been born in the *Mint Work-house*, which stands in the said Parish.

To Both which I answer, That was I not fully satisfied, that these are only Amusements, thrown among the Common People, by ill Men, to support this drooping Cause, I should really think, all the Grave Men I see, came into the World within these Fifteen Years; for else, who is there now alive, that could just before that, write Man, but must know, *That before this New Method was set up, most of our In-Parishes contributed and paid to the Maintenance of the Poor in the Out-Parishes?* And would it not be in the Power of the Justices in their *Sessions*, if this *Corporation* was laid aside, to Renew the same, or make any farther Additions or Regulations, as might be thought Reasonable or Necessary? And why should not this be a satisfactory Answer to St. Peter's likewise? However, if it does not appear so, theirs being an odd Case, I suppose, it would not be difficult, if we should have a *Repealing Act*, to have some Provision therein, whereby the said Parish might be made easy.

If what is here offer'd, does not convince our angry Neighbours, yet I hope it may serve to Justifie ourselves, in the several Steps we have made in opposing them. The Behaviour of some few, on this Occasion, has been strangely Brutish, and Unchristian; but pray *Why so VVarm and Arbitrary?* Have we not an Equal Right with You, to Remonstrate, what we really think to be a Grievance? And this we did, neither with Multitude, nor with Tumult. And I am satisfy'd, we had not a *Hand* to our *Petition*, but was a *Volunteer*; and that, even after a full Conviction of the

Truth

Truth of the Premises; and this fill'd in about 48 Hours; and had there been Room or Occasion might have had Thrice as many more in a very short Time; when You took a great many Days, I may say, I believe, Weeks, about your's, by *surprizing* some, and *threatning* and *menacing* others into a Compliance; which was a very odd Way of Proceeding. But any thing, it seems, is Justifiable in the *Saints*, or those that side with them. It would be thought impertinent perhaps, to trouble the Reader with the simple Behaviour of some other particular Persons; and therefore shall wave it. But there is one Thing which favours so much, of *Malice* and *Folly*, that I must crave Leave to mention it; and that is, *When any poor People beg an Alms, instead of Relieving them, they are directed to several of our Houses by Name, and told, That we ought to maintain them, because we Oppos'd the getting an Additional Sum for that Purpose*; with much more of this Kind. This we take to be crying *A-l-o* to the Mobb to pull down our Houses. But these Folks mightily mistake; the Poor are wholly in our Interest on this Occasion, for it is likewise their Own, and heartily lend us their Prayers. Then how easy could we effectually pay these Persons in their own Coin; for, but a small Hint; would do the Business; but far be it from us, even but to think of such a Return.

I am inform'd that some of our Magistrates are resolv'd to carry on this Way of Management, even if a farther Sum cannot be obtain'd; and they will find a *Treasurer*, &c. And some of the *Guardians* are told, under the Rose, that they must *Cut their Coat according to the Cloth*; which in plain English is, That a Poor Person out of the House of Eighty or Ninety Years of Age, and that now has perchance Sixteen Eighteen Pence per Week for House-Rent and Valls, and really ought to have at least Two Shi

you must now Reduce to One Shilling *per Week*, and let them Beg about the Town to make up the rest ——— So we are like to have a fine Time out it seems.

I suppose they design to put the *Treasurer* in Cash, by a farther Loan, of some of the *Charity-Money*, out of the *Chamber*. This is a horrid Way of discharging several considerable Trusts, that are there Repos'd For how does it answer the Will of the Donor (suppose Alderman *Aldsworth*, by Name) that has given a considerable Sum to be lent to Ordinary Tradesmen, bringing Security, free of Interest, for Seven Years, for they to Lend this Money to the Corporation of the Poor, who now actually have 15500*l*. of such Money, Lent a-fresh, a few Months since for Seven Years to come, a great part of which they have had on the same Account for several Years past?

But the farther Consideration of this, and all such Management, I submit to the Judgment of all Judicious and Unprejudic'd Men.

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